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ABSTRACT

The study of the varieties of language usage in social contexts can made a significant contribution to general welfare if judgments of people's language are unshackled from right-wrong presuppositions and a dispassionate approach is taken to relating their language to the situations they must deal with in the course of their lives. An understanding of code switching can be a valuable tool to a literary critic, and, conversely, literature that rings true in sociolinguistic terms can illuminate our understanding of people's behavior in different language contexts. A failure to take into account individual and group differences in language usage, and pressures to maintain or avoid certain usages, has hampered effective reading instruction. Both in terms of comprehension and performance, reading instruction will benefit from a recognition of the fact that a child's spoken language does affect his/her reading. Finally, medical practitioners will find their communication with patients much improved if they take into account not only dialectal differences and unfamiliarity with jargon, but also patient expectations from doctor language. The language of the doctor with an effective bedside manner will be flexible for the sake of a communicative dialogue, without being condescending or pretentiously non-standard or common. (JB)

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SOME RECENT APPLICATIONS OF SOCIOLINGUISTIC THEORY AND RESEARCH

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1.0 TOWARD A DEFINITION OF SOCIOLINGUISTICS

It has often been whispered but never, to my knowledge, uttered aloud, that sociolinguistics is a sub-field of linguistics which is frantically searching for its own destruction. If linguistics had not wandered into the wilderness of abstract self-centeredness, it would probably never have been necessary to create a label such as sociolinguistics as a rallying cry for examining language in realistic social contexts.

Although any effort to define a broad field of study such as sociolinguistics is subject to question and criticism by some of its practitioners, it will be useful to attempt at least a broad definition of the term here. Three major characteristics tend to characterize the field:

1. A concern for viewing language *variation* rather than the sort of universals upon which grammars are usually based.
2. A concern for seeing language in real *social contexts* rather than as abstract representations.
3. A high potential for relationship and application to other fields such as education, sociology, anthropology, psychology and many others.

In a sense, the third characteristic is really an outgrowth of the first two, but, for our purposes here, these three aspects will be treated equally.

At the present time, a sociolinguist may be defined as a person who studies variation within a language or across languages with a view toward describing that variation or toward writing rules which incorporate it (rather than, as in the past, ignoring it), relating such variation to some aspects of the cultures which use it, doing large scale language surveys (macroanalysis), doing intensive studies of discourse (microanalysis), studying language functions (in addition to language

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forms), discovering the comparative values of different varietes of language or of different languages for the benefit of political or educational planning and decision making, studying language attitudes, values and beliefs, and relating all the above to other fields which may make use of it (including education).

Although there has been a recent flurry of interest in language in real social settings, it would be foolish to claim that sociolinguistics is a new concept. It is quite likely, in fact, that man has been interested in the sorts of variation by which people set themselves off from each other since the very beginnings of speech. Humans have always lived with the cultural and linguistic paradox on needing to be like each other while, at the same time, needing to establish their individuality. These needs, coupled with the multitude of complexities involved in cultural and linguistic change, motivations, attitudes, values and physiological and psychological differences, present a vast laboratory for sociolinguistic investigation.

1.1 THE CONCERN FOR VARIATION

In many ways, sociolinguistics involves a putting back together of a number of separations that have taken place over the years within the field of linguistics. For one thing, the separation of language universals from variability has proved very troublesome in recent years. The more traditional view linguistics (common in the sixties) which excludes the variational and functional aspects of language from formal linguistic analysis and describes such characteristics as mere trivial performance is finding disfavor at a rapid pace. In a sense, the term *static* may be used to refer to the frameworks of both structural and transformational linguist cs. A static grammar is one which excludes variation of any sort, including time, function, socio-economic status, sex and ethnicity, from the preview of formal linguistic analysis.

1.2 THE CONCERN FOR SOCIAL CONTEXT

The emphasis on social context by sociolinguistics was, of course, old hat to anthropologists, especially ethnographers of communication. Dell Hymes has been arguing for a realistic description of language for many years, observing that institutions, settings, scenes, activities

and various sociocultural realities give order to such analysis.[1] An ethnographic approach to speech requires that the analyst have information about the relative statuses of the interlocutors, the setting of the speech act, the message, the code (including gestures), the situation, the topic, the focus and the presuppositions that are paired with the sentences. At long last, the ethnographers of communications are beginning to get some help from linguists with other primary specializations. The upshot of all this ferment within the past few years has been an almost entirely new set of attitudes within the field of linguistics. It is difficult to describe linguistics at any point in its history as being settled with an orthodoxy but some broad, general movements can be discerned with hindsight. In the forties and fifties we saw a structuralist emphasis with a focus on phonology, a concern for the word and philosophical framework which was positivistic and empirical. In the sixties we witnessed the transformationalist era, with a focus on syntax, a concern for the sentence and a philosophical framework which was rationalistic or idealistic, with innate knowledge and intuition playing a prominent role in analysis.

Another clear separation which has been vigorously maintained in linguistics over the years is the separation between synchronic and diachronic studies. That is, the separation of the study of language change from the analysis of a language at a given point in time. Such a notion dates back many years.

1.3 THE CONCERN FOR CROSS-DISCIPLINARY SENSITIVITY

In addition, two factors outside the proper domain of linguistics also contributed heavily to the development of sociolinguistics. One was the general broadening of interests which began to develop in the sixties, leading to new kinds of interdisciplinary studies. The second was the development of interest in problems faced by minority peoples, especially in the schools. Linguists began to take an interest in ur-

[1] One might cite many references over a period of time. For a recent overview, however, see Dell Hymes, The Scope of Sociolinguistics in R. Shuy (ed.), Sociolinguistics: current trends and prospects, Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press (1973).

ban language variation and to understand that past research methodologies were not viable for such investigation. New data-gathering techniques were required and new modes of analysis were needed. Meanwhile, linguists who had been interested in language variation as it is found in the creolization and pidginization of language also began to apply their knowledge to urban social dialect, particularly the urban, northern Black, often providing important historical backgrounds for language change and offering analytical insights brought about by their perspectives. The general focus of course, was on variability, not abstract uniformity and the critical measurement point was provided by the variability offered by Vernacular Black English. It was thought of as an area worthy of educational attention. Everything seemed ripe for this focus on Black English except for one thing--nobody in the academic world knew very much about it.

1.4 INTERNAL DISTINCTIONS

It should be apparent, therefore, that sociolinguistics arose out of a number of factors within the field of linguistics itself. A convergence of different avenues away from orthodox generative theory took place among dialectologists, creolists, semanticians and antgropologiests. Although the avenues were different, each shared a concern for variation, social reality, larger units of analysis (discourse) and a sense of continuum.

A focus of study which developed out of a diversity of interests the way sociolinguistics has is likely to have an equally diverse literature. Yet there are some common threads which seem to help hold sociolinguistics together. One such characteristic is the concept of gradience.

1.4.1 GRADIENCE

As is often the case, personal experience provides a good first example. When I was in college I had a part-time job in a wholesale grocery warehouse loading and unloading trucks and boxcars. My fellow teamsters knew that I was a college kid but also expected me to be one of them in some sense of the word. As a native speaker of their local version of non-standard English, I found it possible to use the locally

acceptable "I seen him when he done it" forms but their linguistic expectations of a college kid made them suspicious of me every time I tried. Years ago the novelist Thomas Wolfe wrote a novel called *You Can't Go Home Again*. His thesis was that people are the products of their changing environment and that this changing environment includes the changing expectations of others. Translated to our situation this means that no matter how uneducated a person's parents may be, they expect their child to speak something other than the non-standard English they grew up with. The child who is sensitive to his parents' wishes may respond by rattling off a locution that appears to be within the range of his parents' expectations. On the other hand, some situations may require him to not deny his heritage but to not appear uppity either. Precious few linguistic situations will require him to preserve his non-standard dialect exactly the way it was before he was educated and elevated to some other level of expectations by those who love him. The following sentences may serve as illustrations of some of the points on such a continuum.

1. Hey! Don't bring no more a dem crates over here!
2. Hey! Don't bring no more a dose crates over here!
3. Hey! Don't bring no more a those crates over here!
4. Hey! Don't bring any more of those crates over here!
5. Hey! Please don't bring any more of those crates over here!
6. Gentlemen, will you kindly desist in your conveying those containers in this general direction.

Number 6 is surely undesireable in most communications and it is included only to extend the limits of the contimuum as far as can be imagined. Most of the adjustments that an educated speaker makes to his audience are found in various modifications of numbers 3, 4, and 5. Most certainly, there are few opportunities for him to go home to the non-standardness of numbers 1 and 2. Those who know him will think he is patronizing them or, worse yet, making fun of them. Consequently, what the speaker does is to make subtle adjustments to his vocabulary, grammar and phonology depending on the informality of the situation, the audience and the topic. One safe move is to standardize the grammar, since grammar is the most stigmatizing aspect of American social dialects, while occasionally preserving a few of the less stigmatizing pro-

nunciations and leaving in some flavor of the lexicon. This is a highly subtle and complicated linguistic maneuver which can hardly be oversimplified or underestimated.

In no way should it be implied that the specific continuum given as example above is meant to be a right to wrong slide. Each item of the continuum has the potential for appropriateness and accurary if the proper setting topic and person is discovered. But the schools would be likely to take it as a right-wrong series with a sharp line between numbers 3 and 4 with *wrong* facing one direction and *right* facing the other. Likewise, all of the *rights* would be considered good and all of the *wrongs* would be thought bad. What such an oversimplification denies, of course, are the following things:

1. That language use is more complex than a presupposed context or pseudomoral code will permit.
2. That users of language may intentionally select so-called stigmatized constructions.
3. That users of language may unintentionally select so-called constructions which, having been used, provide clear evidence of their having learned part of the pattern though not all of it.

It has been argued by linguists that people tend to be unable to perceive the fact they are using language as they use it. One might ask, for example, if the fish see the water in which they are swimming. Much rather clear evidece seems to indicate that users of language are fairly unaware of how it is that they are giving themselves away as they speak. Studies of social stratification using only language data may well be the most accurate indices of socio-economic status yet devised. Since people have such a hard time seeing the language they and others use (for they are, after all, concentrating on understanding it, not analyzing it), they remain relatively naive about the subtle complexities they are able to engineer in using it. Contrastive norms in language production and in subjective reactions to language are a clear case in point. Many New Yorkers and Detroiters, for example, will realize a high frequency of a stigmatized feature in their own speech despite the fact that they can clearly recognize the same feature as stigmatized in the speech of others.

1.4.2 FREQUENCY OF OCCURRENCE

In addition to the complexities growing out of gradience and general variability, another area of complexity to which linguists have only recently attended is quantitative variability. As odd as it now may sound, it has not been the practice of linguists to note the frequency of occurrence of a given variable feature until very, very recently. An amusing internal argument is still going on between linguists who understand this principle and those who do not. It is said, for example, that copula deletion is a characteristic of Vernacular Black English as it is spoken in New York, Washington, D.C. and Detroit. Certain linguists violently object to this idea, noting that Southern Whites also say "he here" or "you gonna do it." And, of course, they are quite correct. What they fail to see, however, is that those who posit copula deletion as a characteristic of Vernacular Black English are not comparing Southern Whites to Northern Blacks but are, quite the contrary, concerned about what is considered Vernacular Black English in those specific Northern contexts. But even there, we find that speakers of that dialect do not delete every copula. The frequency of occurrence of that deletion stratifies quite nicely according to socio-economic status. Likewise, not very standard English speakers produce a copula every time it might be expected in their speech, although the frequency of occurrence is probably very high. An even clearer case is that of multiple negation which is also said to characterize Vernacular Black English, even though it is quite clear that many Whites also use the form regularly. What, then, can it mean to call it Vernacular Black English? Simply, that it is consistently found to occur in the continuous, natural speech of Blacks at a much higher frequency than it occurs in the speech of Whites from the same communities and of the same socio-economic status. Strangely enough, this sort of finding is still rather new in linguistics and, to some linguists, quite heretical.

An example of a display of such data on the frequency of occurrence of a linguistic feature which is shared by all social groups (most of them *are* shared) is the following:

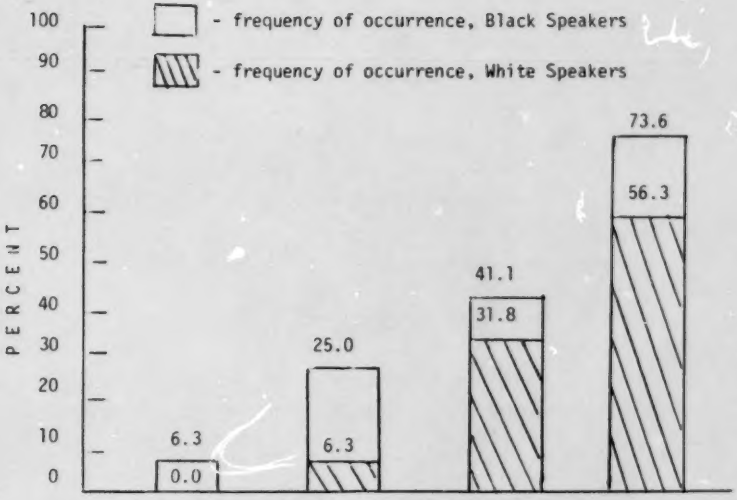

Figure 1. Multiple negation: frequency of occurrence in Detroit, by SES group.

Note that the frequency of occurrence of the use of multiple negation across four SES groups in Detroit is maintained regardless of the race of the speakers, but that Blacks use multiple negation at a higher frequency than do Whites. Further information reveals that men use them at a rate higher than women. Such data cannot tell us the Blacks use multiple negatives and that Whites do not. Nor could it say that men use them and women do not. But it *does* offer rich information about the tendencies toward higher or lower variability usage than we could ever obtain from a methodology which offered only a single instance of such usage as evidence of its use or non-use. The figures above represent a number of informants in each of the four SES groups and a large quantity of occurrences of the feature for each informant represented in the group. In the case of multiple negation, in addition to tabulating the occurrences, it was necessary to see them in relationship to a meaningful touchstone. Thus every single negative and every

multiple negative in each speaker's speech sample were added together to form a universe of potential multiple negatives. The figures, tabulated above, display the relationship of the occurrence of multiple negatives in relationship to all potential multiple negatives.

It is reasonably safe to assume that the extent of language variation is much broader than previous research methodologies ever revealed. If an informant is asked, for example, what he calls the stuff in the London air, he may respond only once, /fag/. If he should happen to use the /a/ vowel before a voiced velar stop only 50% of the time during all the occasions in which he totally lost in this single representation in the interview. If he talks continuously for thirty minutes or so, he might use this pronunciation a dozen or more times, giving an increasingly more probable representation of his actual usage. Of course, such data gathering techniques work better for pronunciations in which the inventory of possible occurrences is very high than they do for lexicon. On the other hand, research in sociolinguistics indicates that pronunciation and grammar are more crucial indicators than vocabulary, a factor which certainly justifies highlighting them for research.

1.4.3 SELECTIONAL OPTIONS

Once we dispose of the notion of the right-wrong polarity evaluation and conceive of language as a continuum which operates in realistic contexts, the possibility of selectional options becomes meaningful. It is conceivable, for example, that a speaker out of a number of possible motivations, may select forms which, in some other context, would be considered stigmatized. Detailed studies of language variation have only begun to scratch the surface of such continua but several examples are suggestive of fruitful avenues of future research.

For example, I can clearly remember that as a child in a blue-collar industrial community, certain language restrictions were operational among pre-adolescent boys. To be an acceptable member of the peer group it was necessary to learn and to execute appropriate rules for marking masculinity. If a boy happened to be the toughest boy in the class, he had few worries for whatever else he did would be offset by this fact. Those of us who were not the toughest could establish our masculinity in a number of ways, many of which are well recognized.

For example, the use of tough language, especially swearing, and adult vices, such as smoking, were sometimes effective means of obtaining such status. Likewise, if a boy were a good athlete, he could easily establish himself as masculine (in our society this was true only for football, basketball and baseball and not for sports such as swimming, soccer or tennis). On the other hand, a boy could clearly obtain negative points by having a non-sex-object relationship with a girl, by liking his sister, by playing certain musical instruments (especially piano and violin) and by outwardly appearing to be intelligent in the classroom. It is the latter avenue which is of interest to us here since the major instrument for adjusting one's outward appearance or intelligence was his use of oral language. Interestingly enough, what one did with written language seemed less crucial, as long as it remained a private communication between teacher and student. That is, a boy could be as smart as he wanted to on a test or an essay as long as the written document did not become public (i.e. become displayed on the bulletin board).

1.4.4 PERCEPTUAL VIEWPOINT OF THE WHOLE

Still another characteristic of sociolinguistics is involved in the very viewpoint from which language phenomena are perceived. It is logical to believe that once the basics of language are understood, other less central features will fall into place. It has been traditional in linguistics to follow this logic. Thus linguists of various theoretical persuasions have searched for the core, the basics and the universals of language and have paid little attention to the peripheral, the surface or the variables. Sociolinguists do not decry an interest in universals or basics, but feel that the peripheral variables are much more important than have ever been imagined. In fact, sociolinguists tend to treat peripheral and basic components on a par, and they believe that to understand one, they must also know a great deal about the other. Sociolinguists, therefore, stress variation, especially as it is related to sex, age, race, socio-economic status and stylistic varieties. They feel that by paying attention to such variables, they can better understand the exciting dynamics of language and see it as a whole.

1.4.5 SUBJECTIVE REACTIONS

The development of sociolinguistics has also been paralleled by an interest in the subjective reactions of speakers to language. If speakers produce linguistic features with varying frequencies, if they make use of complex selectional options and if they shift back and forth along a base line continuum, they most certainly also react to language produced by others. In recent years, sociolinguists have become interested in three types of subjective reactions to variation in spoken and written language:

1. Studies which compare subjective reactions to more than one language.
2. Studies which compare subjective reactions to variation within the same language.
3. Studies which compare accented speech, the production of a language by non-native speakers.

It is felt that such studies will enable linguists to get at the threshold if not at the heart, of language values, beliefs and attitudes. From there it is a relatively short step to relating such attitudes to actual language teaching and planning. For example, research by Wallace Lambert and his associates (1960) attempted to determine how bilingual Canadians really felt about both English and French in that area. Therefore, several bilinguals were tape recorded speaking first one language, then the other. The segments were scrambled and a group of bilingual Canadians were asked to listen to the tape and rate the speakers on fourteen traits such as height, leadership ability, ambition, sociability, character and others. The listeners were not told that they were actually rating people twice--once in French and once in English. It was somewhat surprising to the researchers that the speakers were generally stigmatized when they spoke French and favored when they spoke English. This was interpreted as evidence of a community-wide stereotype of English-speaking Canadians as more powerful economically and socially.

An example of a study which compares listener reactions to variation within the same language was done in Detroit (Shuy, Baratz and Wolfram 1969). An equal number of Black and White, male, adult Detroiters from four known socio-economic groups were tape recorded in a relatively free-conversation mode. These tapes were played to Detroiters

of three age groups (sixth grade, eleventh grade and adult). An equal number of males and females, Blacks and Whites listened to the tape. These judges represented the same four socio-economic groups as the speakers. The purpose of the study was to determine the effects which the race, sex, socio-economic status and age of the listener have on identifying the race and socio-economic status of the speaker. The results of the study showed that racial identity is quite accurate for every cell except for the upper middle-class Black speakers, who were judged as White by 90% of the listeners, regardless of their race, age or sex. It also showed that the lower the class of the speaker, the more accurately he was identified by listeners, regardless of all other variables. The significance of this lies in the fact that listeners apparently react negatively to language more than favorably to it. That is, stigmatizing features tend to count against a speaker more than favoring features tend to help him. Such information is, of course, useful in determining how to plan a language learning curriculum, among other things.

A recent study of accented speech was done by A. Rey (1974) and contrasted the subjective reactions of Miami teachers, employers and random adults to the accented speech of Cuban-born and Native White and Black Miamians. Rey's interest was in the extent to which accent played a role in both employability and school evaluation. He played tape recordings of various speakers to groups of listeners and concluded that the lower status Cuban born Miamians have the least chance for success, even when the employer or teacher is also Cuban born.

2.0

To date, the study of sociolinguistics can be said to have hardly begun. Variation is a vast expanse of possibilities which should keep linguists busy for years to come. A very small dent has been made in the study of variation among certain minority groups. Through an accident of history, a great deal has been learned about Vernacular Black English but very little is known about the variation used by standard English speakers, regardless of race. Little is known about the sort of variation which establishes a speaker as a solid citizen, a good guy or an insider. Despite some intensive research in the area, little

is known about how people shift from one register to another or, for that matter, from one dialect or language to another. Only the barest beginnings have been made in the study of special group characteristics related to language (i.e. language and religion, law and medicine, etc.). A great deal of research needs to be done on language attitudes, values and beliefs. Although language change has received attention in a number of recent studies, sociolinguistic research still lacks knowledge of a number of aspects of the exciting dynamics of language.

In short, the social contexts in which language can be studied have almost as many variations as there are people to vary them. In some fields of study, graduate students writing thesis or dissertations often become discouraged over the fact that all the good topics for research have already been used up. This dilem a is far from a reality in sociolinguistics, where topics abound and where we are only at the beginning.

As an example of the richness of the applicational possibilities, we will cite three areas in which sociolinguistic theory and research have shown promise: literary analysis, reading and medicine.

2.1 LITERARY ANALYSIS

The systematic study of code-switching by linguists usually involves the following techniques: anonymous observations (Gumperz 1964:171-2; Gumperz and Bloom 1971); individual informant interviews (Labov 1966; Shuy, Wolfram and Riley 1968) and small-group elicitation or discussion sessions (Gumperz 1970; Labov 1970:46-49). As far as can be determined, little or no work has been done by linguists in studying the already written observation of code-switching by sensitive authors. One hypothesis of sociolinguistics is that a theory of code-switching can be applied not only to the examination of real conversational data, whether elicited surreptitiously or in interview contexts, but also to the written representation of such real conversational data by competent authors. By applying what is known about code-switching as a rule-governed behavior we should be able to determine the degree to which a given author consistently represents this rule-governed behavior and, to the extent which he is consistent or inconsistent, evaluate that author's innate sociolinguistic effectiveness. For the socio-

linguist, the information being examined (a novel, a short story, or a poem) may be little more than a new batch of data through which he can crank and test his sociolinguistic theory and machinery. To the literary critic, however, the results of recent research in communicative competence in general, and in this case, code-switcing in particular offer a new and objective instrument for analyzing an author's consistency in representing reality, for examining a writer's subtle shifts of intention or indications of characterization. It has long been observed that great authors write better than they know. One would assume from such a statement that writers not only internalize sociolinguistic rules, language functions and formal language knowledge, but that they also make use of such features without really being able to say what it is they are doing as they do it. This is not surprising to linguists who have long marvelled at how well children acquire their native language without having the foggiest notion of how to describe this knowledge to others. It might be argued, of course, that such behavior is not really writing better than an author knows (depending on how *knows* is defined); it is, rather, writing better than his ability to describe his ability to write. A sociolinguistic analysis of literature promises nothing to the author in this case, but it does offer a theory and methodology for discussing what it is that a author does and how well he does it.

In order to illustrate the usefulness of the knowledge of code-switching in a literary context, I have selected D.H. Lawrence's novel *Lady Chatterly's Lover*, which contains one of the classic literary instances of dialect shifting.[2] Mellors, the gamekeeper in the household of Lord and Lady Chatterly, speaks what Lawrence describes as broad Derbyshire dialect on many occasions. On the other hand, he is also known to speak a rather standard version of English, perhaps as a result of his being "...attached to some Indian colonel who took a liking to him" when he served as a Lieutenant in the British Army. We get a glimpse of this linguistic situation when Lady Chatterly asks

[2]Roger W. Shuy, "Code Switching in Lady Chatterly's Lover" *Working Papers in Sociolinguistics*, Number 22 (February, 1975)

her husband: "How could they make him an officer when he speaks broad Derbyshire?". To this Sir Clifford replies: "He doesn't...except by fits and starts. He can speak perfectly well, for him. I suppose he has the idea if he's come down to the ranks again, he'd better speak as the ranks speak". This speech certainly reflects the observations of sociolinguistic researchers on how social information is revealed by language switching. It is also a strong indication that Lawrence was probably consciously aware of this sociolinguistic principle. What remains is to observe how well he carried it out in his representations of the speech of his characters.

The codes involved in Lady Chatterly's Lover are assumed to be two homogeneous and clear-cut dialects of English. These raise theoretical and terminological problems for linguists, whose definition of code historically has usually meant two separate non-mutually intelligible language systems. It is not at all clear that Gumperz uses the term this way, however, and a good case can be made for lumping code-switching with dialect-switching (sometimes called style shifting) in terms of their roles and effects. Regardless of exact terminological precision, it appears that the two language systems in contrast are a kind of standard English versus a broad Derbyshire dialect. Lawrence is relatively clear in the instances in which he wishes his reader to perceive the dialogue as being in the latter dialect. The accuracy of his representation will not be at issue here but suffice it to say that the phonology of this dialect is represented in spellings (*yer* for *you*, *waitin'* for *waiting*, *'adn't* for *hadn't*, *a'* for *all*, *Ah* for *I*, *pleece* for *place*, *ax* for *ask*, *abaht* for *about*, *ma'es* for *makes*, etc.). Occasionally, the orthographic representation appears to be mere eye dialect as in *th'* for *the*, *du* for *do* and *anuther* for *another*, but generally speaking, Lawrence represents broad Derbyshire pronunciation rather consistently. The grammar of the dialect is predictably non-standard, with double negatives (*Sir Clifford 'adn't got no other key then?*), non-standard verb usages (*Ah thowt it wor ordinary.*) and local syntactic forms ("*Appen Sir Clifford 'ud know*"). The standard dialect is characterized primarily by a regularity of orthography and grammar but primarily by the absence of the marked forms of broad Derbyshire such as those noted above. In the minds of writers, as appar-

ently, in the minds of most speakers, standard is primarily the absence of stigmatized forms (Shuy 1969).

In terms of the *settings* and *participants* involved in the switching, Mellors speaks only standard English to Sir Clifford, Sir Malcom and Mrs. Bolton. He speaks standard English to Hilda until she insults him at which point he answers her in dialect. He also speaks to Hilda primarily when she is a visitor in his house. He speaks local dialect consistently to his dog and to his penis on the occasions which he addresses it as a person. It is only when Mellors switches in speaking to Lady Chatterly that clarification is required.

As noted above, *topic*, also is an essential factor in code-switching. Consistently throughout the novel certain topics are discussed by Mellors in standard English only. Whenever the topic of Lady Chatterly's proposed trip to Venice is introduced (three separate occasions,) Mellors discusses it only in standard. The same can be said for the topics of sex (mutual orgasm, his libido and any memories of their past sexual experiences), three discussions about their philosophies of life, Mellors' personal background, the topic of divorce (four times) and discussions about what constitutes good English. Three times the topic of Mellor's first wife is discussed in standard English and once in dialect. Likewise, once Mellors discusses his work as gamekeeper in standard and once in dialect. More personal topics, however, are generally discussed in dialect, including his relationship with his daughter, the general topic of children and any philosophical discussions relating to the hardship of the life of a peasant.

In terms of *language situations* or functions, the consistent contrast between standard English and dialects in Mellors' speech is maintained. Introductions, conversational openings, conversational closings, insults, invitations to sex and rejection of sexual overtures are in standard English, while all representations of meal-time conversation, talk during love-making and post-intercourse afterglow conversations were in dialect.

It is not the purpose of this paper to detail all the ways in which Lawrence made use of code-switching in his novel but suffice it to say that he did it masterfully and, from what we know about code switching in real-life research settings, realistically.

What this research hopes is that certain tasks of the literary critic will be aided by recent theoretical developments in sociolinguistics. Specifically, literary critics can be helped to ascertain how effectively and how consistently an author portrays the language of his fictional characters. Recent developments in conversational analysis can provide a scientific touchstone (in well-defined contexts) for literary comparison. One type of analysis might have been to match the orthographic representation of broad Derbyshire dialect with the linguistic atlas research which has been done in that area. In this case, we have chosen rather to make use of a measurement point which is less concerned with the surface manifestation of language representation (the phonology and grammar) and more concerned with the meaning particularly the sort of meaning which may or may not be consciously controlled by the author. If we had analyzed the former question we could learn about how well the author knew the dialect he represented. The latter question gets at a much larger issue: How well does the author know how to make use of the uses of language?

It should be clear, then, that recent developments in sociolinguistic analysis can offer analytic assistance to the field of literary criticism. Unfortunately, the analysis summarized here tells us little that we did not already know about Lawrence's capturing and discussing that ability in measurable terms, perhaps as a point for comparing that same ability in other authors but at least a way of more concretly describing what it is that Lawrence did so well. Perhaps this is all that science can ever offer art.

2.2 READING

One of the more startling revelations which has become clear is that many linguists have ignored the data of written language as a fruitful source of inquiry and analysis. The major thrust of what I have to say here is that the study of written language offers much of the same exciting arena of study that can be found in linguistics studies of the spoken word particularly in the study of how people read, how they learn how to read, how they vary their reading, how they understand what they read and how they use what they know about language to learn more than the reading text which is in front of them.

Almost everything that the sociolinguists and ethnographers of communication have been saying about the role of social context in the production of language holds equally true for its role in reading. Research on how the speech of people from different social classes varies, how the speech of younger people differs from that of older people, how women's speech differs from that of men, how social setting affects speech are all relevant to the field of reading. Using such interrelationships, sociolinguists construct grammatical theories to explain language variation (and thereby, to explain language in its fuller, dynamic sense of the term). In addition, however, linguists are also interested in the manner in which these dialectal variation plays in school performance, effectiveness in standardized tests, in cognitive ability in employment, in the subjective reactions by other speakers (especially by teachers).

At least two areas of sociolinguistics are of immediate interest and application to the field of reading. These are: (1) the effect of spoken language on the reading process and (2) approaches to teaching reading to speakers of a non-standard variety. No pretention of thoroughness will be made for the following overview of these three areas. The point here will be to present them as areas of legitimate concern for linguists and to reveal areas of research which linguists will need to carry out.

1. *The Effect of Spoken Language on the Reading Process.* There are several areas of immediate interest to linguists related to social influences on the effect of spoken language in the reading process. The child is often evaluated on his ability to read a passage aloud. For inner city Black children, this often means that oral rendition, "She go to de sto" for the written "She goes to the store" is considered bad reading.

It is conceivable, furthermore, that a speaker, out of a number of possible motivations, may select forms which, in some other context, would be considered stigmatized. Detailed studies of language variation have only begun to scratch the surface of such continua but several examples are suggestive of fruitful avenues of future research.

It was noted earlier that horizontal or peer groups social

acceptability can be a critical factor in reading success, especially in the working classes. At least two strategies for reasonably intelligent males in this society are as follows:

a. *Keep your mouth shut in class.* If the male is White, this might be interpreted as shyness. If he is Black, it usually is read as non-verbality. The strategy of keeping one's mouth shut in school is employed for different reasons at different times. In early elementary school the child soon learns that the name of the game is to be right as often as possible and wrong as seldom as possible. One way to prevent being criticized by the teacher is to keep one's mouth shut. By pre-adolescence, the male's strategy for keeping his mouth shut grows out of a complex set of pressures stemming from stereotyped expectations of masculine bahavior (i.e. boys are less articulate than girls and less interested in school) and the inherent dangers of appearing unmasculine to one's peers.

b. *If you give the right answer, counteract the "fink effect" by sprinkling your response with stigmatized language.* It is this strategy which boys who are to survive the education process in certain speech communities must certainly master. Those who only keep their mouths shut tend to drop out ultimately for whatever reasons. But males who learn to adjust to the conflicting pressures of school and peer pressure are those who have learned to handle the sociolinguistic continuum effectively. In the proper context and with the proper timing, an intelligent male can learn how to give the answer that the teacher wants in such a way that his peers will not think him a sissy. In English class he will learn how to produce the accepted forms with the subtle nuisances of intonation and kinesics which signal to his peers that rather than copping out, he is merely playing the game, humoring the English teacher along. If he appears to be sufficiently bored, he can be allowed to utter the correct response. If he stresses the sentence improperly, he can be spared the criticism of selecting the accurate verb form.

The deliberate selection of stigmatized language can also be seen in the diagnosis of reading problems in an affluent Washington, D.C., suburb. A well meaning third grade teacher has diagnosed one boy's reading problem as one of "small muscle motor coordination" and she

suggested that the parents send him to a neurologist at once. His father, a physician, objected strenuously muttering something about teachers practicing medicine without a license. Since I knew the family, I was asked to help discover the child's real problem. After a quick and dirty examination in which the boy evidenced little or no problem with decoding or comprehending material which was unknown to him, the only problem I discovered was that his reading was monotonous and mechanical. In the school's terminology, he did not read with "expression". A hasty survey of teachers revealed that boys tend to not read with expression, a fact which is generally accepted along with their non-verbality and dirty fingernails. Why didn't this boy read with expression? My hypothesis is that he considers it sissy. This boy is the smallest male in his class and he is using every means possible to establish his masculinity. In athletics what he lacks in skill he more than makes up with careless abandon. His voice is coarse, his demeanor is tough. He swears regularly. And so on. It would behoove the schools to do several things here. One might question the usefulness of reading with expression at all, but teachers should certainly be able to distinguish this presumed problem from other types of reading problems, particularly neurological ones. But this seems to be evidence of the same sort of pressure, this time in a middle-class community, which pits school norms against peer norms, in this case masculine norms, to the extent that the child is willing to deliberately select the non-standard forms.

Another area in which the social context of reading can be seen to be of interest to the linguist involves the field of testing. Of particular concern are standardized tests which are biased against speakers of non-standard dialects or people with non-mainstream experiences. Intelligence tests are the number one problem area, with tests like the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test a prime culprit. The major fallacies in such tests, from the viewpoint of linguistics, in the basic test content is words. Reading people seem to think of language as a bag of words. Therefore, if you want to measure verbal intelligence, you devise a test that shows how many words a person knows. Thus, if you know the meanings of osculation, humunculus, pensile and cryptogram, you are very intelligent. In addition, the vocabulary tested is primarily from the middle class environment while the norming

population is often regionally focused (The Peabody is used on White children in Nashville).

Reading tests are equally vulnerable to criticizing, particularly for comprehension. The usual task is to extract the main idea, solve a problem, draw an inference, separate fact from opinion or evaluate the author's purpose. All of these depend on one's socialization and the correct answers to all of them depend on the child's ability to match his own socialization to that of the author of the printed page. Of particular interest is the rather standard approach of reading comprehension questions to request the child to read a paragraph, then present four sentences from which to select a best answer. Often such test answers grow out of an obscure portion of the reading, the test assumption being that careful readers are the best readers. The fallacy of this assumption is that as a reader becomes better he learns to process only the important ideas and to ignore the unimportant. If he is truly a good reader, he will conclude with a rather clear outline in his mind, highlighting and retaining only that which is not considered clutter. Consequently the reading test runs the clear risk of penalizing the good reader. If the good reader manages to obtain a high score anyway, it may be due only to the fact that good readers correlate nicely with good test takers. Pilot research done at Indiana University, in fact, has shown that good readers maintain their clear superiority over poor readers even when the stimulus passage is given in Dutch and the of answers are provided in English. In fact, the research went even a step further, deleting the stimulus paragraph all together and offering only a selection of answers to choose among. Good readers continued to score significantly higher, even though they could not have been measured on their ability to comprehend what they had read.

It should be clear, from the examples cited above, that a child's spoken language *does* affect his reading particularly as it is perceived by his teachers. He tends to read in his native dialect. At the early stages, some children must learn that the word attack skills (the relationship of letters to sounds) are in another dialect. For example one reading series explains that the letter *e* stands for the sound /ɛ/ as in *pen*. For 50% of the speakers in the U.S., the realization in that environment is /I/. If a child manages to

overcome the mismatch of the printed page to his oral language, he often displays a reversion to dialects as he becomes a better reader. What likely happens is that once he becomes immune to the decoding strategies to the point that he decodes unconsciously, he attends to the meaning of what he is reading and produces the noises in his native pattern, discarding the instructions of his teacher. Any child who learns to say store with an *r* in the acquisitional literacy stages is likely to produce *sto'* as soon as reading becomes automatic. What we little understand is how various social variables effect this production, especially as it is monitored by instructors and evaluated on tests.

2 *Teaching Reading to Speakers of Non-Standard Varieties.* As is often the case in education, the most progress has been made in the area nearest the surface of consumer visibility. Five different approaches have been suggested during recent years. Starting with the assumption that the reason minority children are not learning to read is related to differences in language and culture (and not genetic), these approaches differ in which aspect of the learning system must do the changing. The child, the teacher or the reading materials.

a. *Adjust the Child*

Traditionally, the American educational system has called for the child to bear the burden of changing. Some educators argue that if a child's dialect is different from that of the literacy materials, it is the child who must do the adjusting. He should first learn to speak Standard English, then learn to read it. Such an argument is seldom stated by the schools but often practiced. If publically stated, the hue and cry of outraged parents, teachers and administrators would be great. From the linguist's viewpoint, the argument is futile since we cannot guarantee that we know how to teach a person to speak Standard English even if it were desirable to do so.

b. *Teacher Education*

Another approach that has been suggested requires change on the part of teachers. This view would have teachers learn enough about the various non-standard dialects to avoid confusing the use of dialect with reading problems. That is, the teacher would learn that a child

who reads *She goes to the store* as *She go to do sto'* is certainly not misreading.

c. *Change Materials*

Two other approaches involving changes in the very materials with which children learn to read. One approach would have beginning reading materials avoid the mismatch with the printed page by bringing the materials to the child's dialect. This approach has not been well received, largely because of the inability of the public to tolerate written versions of non-standard English. Technically, other problems also obtain. How does one represent linguistic variability in written form (is every third negative made multiple for example?). Still another problem grows out of the incredible good-bad assumption of education. By this we mean that many educators do not perceive any eventual good growing out of an initial written down non-standard expression. That is, some educators are unable to defer their gratification, to reverse the frequent accusation made against ghetto children.

d. *Avoidance Strategies*

The second approach which suggests changing teaching materials is one which argues that extant good materials be modified so as to avoid the grammatical mismatches between the spoken non-standard and the written standard. Such materials would sequentially avoid negative constructions, past tense, verb-third singular forms etc., in such a way that the non-standard speaking child is not forced to deal with all or many of them at once. Obviously he will need to learn them some time, but he has no requirement to face them all at once.

e. *Language Experience Approach*

The fifth approach, embodying the principle of starting with the individual child exactly where he is, is the language experience approach. Usually this approach entails having the teacher write down a story or description told by a child. The resultant written language, it is assumed, must match the child's oral language since it *is* the child's oral language. The major difficulty with this approach is that of training the teachers to write down exactly what the child has said.

If the story is translated into a standard English, the point of using the language experience approach will be missed.

In summary, it should be clear that linguists who study the social dimension of language have a great deal to say, but a great deal more to learn, about the field of reading. The problems faced by linguists regarding the public awareness of their field are exacerbated with regard to reading. This is no problem for the average speaker, who might become tongue-tied if he were to think of what he was doing as he talked. To teachers and materials writers, however, it is apparent that educational sequencing, diagnosis, evaluation and the very content of readeng is inherently linked with language and with language which operates in well-defined social settings and contexts. Of what remains for socio-linguists to do, after the more immediate goal of bringing teachers and publishers to awareness of these matters, the following are suggestive:

1. Carry out research on the effect of masculinity and feminity on reading;
2. Correlate new language acquisition data and theory with actual practice in teaching reading;
3. Develop reading ability measures which demonstrate acquisition exclusive of cultural or linguistic interference;
4. Note, assess and disseminate the linguistic and cultural bias of extant reading tests, materials and training programs;
5. Evaluate the various strategies noted above for teaching reading to speakers of various non-standard varieties of English;
6. Carry out further research on the nature of language stereotyping in reading.

No easy plan exists for removing educational problems arising out of dialect differences. What linguists can do is to demonstrate that the various ways in which people speak are equally capable of expressing logical and humane thoughts. They can reveal bias in standardized reading tests and materials. They can expose unfair stereotyping. The variation within a language and the ways this variation is valued reflects the organization of the language community, the regional norms and the social structure. Linguists who will study such phenomena will find it

rewarding to carry their research to the next level, the teaching level, and relate what they know linguistically to reading. We cannot wait for reading people to learn our field. What is more, the children who are not learning to read can ill afford our avoiding this next logical step.

2.3 MEDICINE

The third area of application of sociolinguistic theory and research is the possibly unlikely field of medicine.

The field of medicine has been almost completely overlooked by linguistics as a potential area in which to expand our work domain. To be sure it is not easy to convince the profession which has perhaps the greatest status in America that it needs help from anyone, much less from linguistics, but there are signs that the armor is beginning to crack. Part of our lack of success in convincing medical doctors that we have anything to say to them stems from the strategy we have taken. Typically we have begun with the assumption that doctors want to know what linguistics. Not only is this a poor approach, but it is also probably wrong. What the medical profession is usually interested in are solutions to *their* problems. Most perceived problems relate to medical technology. These we probably can't help much with. Others relate to their relationships with their patients. Such relationships are invariably carried out in language, either spoken or written. The medical history is the first and usually the longest verbal interaction in which doctors and patients participate. This event is of critical importance for the patient, since all future treatment hinges on its accuracy and breadth. Yet little or no training is given the medical student in the "field methods" of his profession, in the "ethnography of interrogation", in the language of minorities, in foreign language or in any sort of cross-cultural understandings. No mention is made of the need for the medical student to develop at least a receptive competence for the many varieties of language which a non-suburban practice might produce and no teaching packages have been developed to help accommodate this possibility.

Only a few linguists in this country are in dialogue with the medical profession on these matters but there is reason to be optimistic

about its future development, provided that the focus of the relationship has integrity. That is, there needs to be a genuine promise of help in solving a real problem and there cannot be evidence of the overpromise of applied linguistics which characterized the overzealous blunders of our earlier history. The most optimistic result one can visualize is a linguist in every medical school. Considerable effort is being made today to get psychiatry to open its doors, a pressure brought about largely by growing public suspicion and distrust. Medicine cannot be far behind for the National Hospital Association has been studying doctor-patient relationships and has compiled a list of the ten questions most often asked by patients. Leading the list is the question: "Why don't doctors explain a medical problem in simple language that a patient can understand?". In answer to this question, the famous heart surgeon Michael E. DeBakey replied: "MOST doctors don't want their patients to understand them! They prefer to keep their work a mystery. If patients don't understand what a doctor is talking about, they won't ask him questions. Then the doctor won't have to be bothered answering them." (Robinson 1973:9-12)

One purpose of a set of recent studies at Georgetown University was to examine the extent of this behavior, to examine how much patients feel or are led to feel that they must communicate with doctors in doctor language. Conversely, we were also interested in those occasions in which doctors showed a need to try to communicate with their patients in patient language. One might hypothesize a continuum such as the following:

Doctors talking only Doctor Language	Doctors talking Doctor Language but Understanding Patient Language	Doctors talking and speaking both Doctor and Patient Language	Patients talking and speaking both Patient and Doctor Language	Patients talking Patient Language but understanding Doctor Language	Patients talking only Patient Language

Figure 2. Doctor-Patient Language Continuum

By far the largest parts of the medical histories were conducted in doctor language and the patients tried very hard to operate in as close a version of doctor language as they could master. Most serious breakdowns came when patients could (or would) not speak doctor language and doctors could (or would) not understand patient language. Our data, though still brief and fragmentary, display evidences of success and failure at all points on the continuum. Our data show, for example, clear evidences of the patients' ability to acquire doctor talk during the interview. In some cases, the learning was purely social, the patient putting forth the best possible social dialect to meet the formality of the occasion. On other occasions, specific medical language was acquired during the interview:

D: And have you every had any accidents, breaking an arm, break a leg...?

P: Not broken, but, I, when your arm is in a sling that means it's not broken. It's not always knocked out of place, but this was when I was a child.

D: It was dislocated.

P: Well, right, dislocated, OK? (nervous laughter)

Another instance of this learning can be seen on another occasion when a woman who had had six previous pregnancies learned the sequence and language of responding very quickly:

D: OK, now your second child?

P: 1959, Georgetown, normal pregnancy

D: And how about the, uh, duration of labor?

P: I'd say it was 1:00 when I came here that night and my son was born at 5:30 in the morning--5:30 a.m.--so I guess it must have been around 4 hours.

D: And...

P: Normal. They were all six pound babies.

This anticipatory response continued through the descriptions of the other four deliveries as well:

D: And your fourth child?

P: 1961.

D: Where was she born?

P: Here, the same, and I don't remember.

D: (Laughs) We're getting this down pat now, aren't we?

Our data also reveal many evidences of the patient's ability to understand doctor talk, even if they don't speak it. Surprisingly, patients are frequently able to guess at the intention of the question even when it is inelegantly stated:

D: Now did he have any problems during the pregnancy of the child?

P: No.

This question follows a discussion of the delivery of the patient's second child during which no antecedent for the *he* exists. It can only be assumed that the doctor meant *you* for *he*. Likewise, the doctor obviously means *your pregnancy* for *pregnancy of the child*. This was a terribly garbled sentence, yet the patient answered without the slightest hesitation, apparently disambiguating as she went along.

The research also reveals instances in which doctors begin to understand patient talk. It will take considerably more data than are now available for us to catalogue the types of misunderstandings doctors have of patient language, primarily because the patient says so little during the medical history, following a strategy so successfully used by minority school children who learn very early that the name of the game is to be right as often as possible and wrong as seldom as possible and that the best way to avoid being wrong is to keep one's mouth shut. Another reason why we have so few examples of doctor's misunderstanding of patient language stems from the social structure of the speech event. The doctor is simply not to be wrong. We have some recorded instances, however, in which clear acquisition of patient talk by a doctor seem to have taken place:

P: Oh, he did, uh, in last April he had a little touch of sugar when...

D: He has a little *what?*

P: You know, diabetic...

D: Oh, he had some sugar.

A more serious example occurred during an early observation during which the doctor asked the patient if she had ever had an abortion. She denied that she had, even though her chart clearly indicated two previous abortions. In the doctor's mind, the patient had chosen to tell a lie for the evidence was clearly before him. After the doctor had left, the patient was asked by a linguist whether or not she had ever lost a baby. She readily admitted to having lost two. In the ensuing conversation it was determined that the patient was defining abortion as self-induced while the doctor was using the term to refer to a wider range of possibilities. It seems obvious here that the doctor has not learned patient language either.

On the other hand, few doctors demonstrate ability to speak patient talk. If evidence from our research and from the accounts in medical journals is accurate, few doctors have mastered the ability to speak the language of the working-class, minority or foreign-language-speaking patient. Severe problems can result from miscommunication on all levels, particularly for the non-English speaker. In fact, the clearest mandate seems to be for hospitals, clinics and other medical facilities to gear up for medical services for speakers of foreign languages.

A more cautious note must be sounded, however, for the need for doctors to attempt to speak patient dialect, a practice which can lead to serious problems. For example, one conscientious doctor, sensitive to the fact that his patient was Black and poor, assumed that she would be more comfortable with "homey" expressions, despite the fact that she had already passed through such fine distinctions as flebitis, rheumatic fever, transfusions and epilepsy. He was doing very well in his history taking, giving the appearance of casual yet professional ease. He was friendly and interested in the patient as a person. And then he blew it with his liberal enthusiasm:

D: What about *belly* pain?

P: (pause, followed by recovery) No.

D: (unperturbed and growing more dramatic) Have you had a problem with burning when you urinate or do you find you're running to the *john* every five minutes?

P: (slowly) No.

D: (rising to cresendo) Or do you have an extreme urgency, like do you feel when you have to go urinate that, oh, the urge is just tremendous that you have to run and get there or else you'll *wet your pants?*

If these questions seem ludicrous to us, how much more ludicrous must they have seemed to the patient. Here she was, working desperately to speak doctor talk, with medical terminology and a minimum of vernacular grammar and he uses words like belly, John, and wet your pants. The effect must be similar to that of a fifty-five year old youth worker trying to talk teen-age slang. It is also akin to the problem some of us have who grew up speaking a non-standard dialect but, having gotten educated, are no longer allowed to use it by the people we grew up with and love. Their expectation of us simply won't allow it even though they may continue to use it themselves.

As noted earlier, by far the largest part of the medical history, from the data available to us so far, indicates a doctor dominance in language and perspective. It is, in one sense at least, his native country, his home grounds. The patient is the foreigner or intruder. A great deal has been said in recent years about a similar situation in education. For a long time we have made noises about starting with the child where he is and yet, as mentioned earlier, massive programs have been mounted to remake children in the eyes of the school norm so that they can benefit from the teaching perspective. Such programs are saying, in effect, that the child is simply not good enough, and that in order to be taught he must become like the school, especially in matters of language and culture. It appears that a similar situation obtains in medicine. Our limited data show that almost 40% of the patients surveyed feel extremely uncomfortable about understanding what doctors are telling them and about making themselves clear to doctors. An equal number feel that doctors are generally unfriendly and intimidating. Our tape recorded data reveal startling instances to verify the communication breakdown and call to question the efficiency of the medical history in cross-cultural settings. Add to this the fact that it is the patient who is at the disadvantage. He is either in need of medical attention or thinks he has such a need. Just as one might expect a person with education to adjust to the needs of the person being taught,

so might one expect the healthy to adjust to the needs of the sick. And yet, strong indication exists that such an adjustment is only infrequently made. With the exceptions of the histories taken by the private physicians in our study, we can safely generalize that the doctors do not speak patient language and, much more seriously, that they often give little evidence of understanding it. They are not especially friendly, not very good at making the patient comfortable and generally lack expertise at question-asking. The patient generally adjusts to the doctor perstective, offering medical terms whenever possible. When the patient cannot do this well, the history is slowed and made less efficient. In short, the general expectation is for the patient to learn doctor talk.

A great deal could be learned by the clinic doctors from the contrastive technique of one private physician whose demeanor was relaxed, congenial and enthusiastic. Some random quotations from his histories will serve as examples:

...Here's an illustration of what I mean.

...Great! It'll probably work out fine for you.

...Let's watch that but don't worry too much about it.

...You look like a million dollars.

...Mrs. M, are there any questions I can answer for you?

...No problems here. And your last labor was much too easy.

...So what I'd like to say is that everything that's going on is quite normal.

It takes a long time for this doctors' patients to learn to take advantage of the openings he regularly provides them to ask any questions they want. One of his patients confided:

> I thought he was toobusy so I didn't ask a lot of things until I was in my ninth month. Then Dr. G realized that I, you know, had been holding back. But we got everything straighted out in time.

This same doctor evidenced a clear appreciation of the language needs of his patients. Although he never attempted to speak Vernacular Black English himself (fully realizing how ludicrous it might sound) he was sensitive to his obligation to help the patient understand *his* language, without being patronising or stuffy. For example, to a sixteen-year-old patient he said:

> It might be advisable to induce forced bleeding. Incidentally, Ann, you might have noticed that you have a lot of mucus in your flow and that's normal...and it's called lucorbea.

The approach was not, "You have lucorbea". Such a statement would either require the patient to ask what the term means, thus lowering her status even further or retreat to fearful and ignorant silence, a strategy which I suspect to be frequent in our data.

In summary, or the general points on the doctor-patient, medical history language continuum (Figure 2) the major breakdowns occur at the extremes. Some patients cannot or will not speak doctor language. Likewise, some doctors cannot or will not speak patient language. It has been suggested, in fact, that it is probably disastrous for them to try. The obvious area of hope lies in the central portions of the continuum. Historically, we have expected patients to carry all the burden here. Either they learn to understand doctors or they remain ignorant. Naturally this is a gross generalization but one which is generally supportable from our data. One would hope for considerably more from the medical profession.

At the very minimum one would hope that the medical profession would give some attention to the matters in the ethnography of interrogation. It is strange that of all professions, both teaching and medicine rely so heavily on the answers of their clients but pay so little attention to the vast complexities of question-asking.

Secondly, one would hope that the medical profession would give some attention to the matter of receptive competence of patient language on the part of their practitioners. It is patently absurd to run the risk of getting inaccurate information in the medical interview simply because the patient does not want to admit ignorance of the question or because the question was indelicately asked. There is far too much at stake for such a situation to be maintained. Despite the extant crowding in the medical school curriculum this situation is serious enough to merit change. Focus and time must be given to the language and culture of minorities in medicine.

3.0 CONCLUSIONS

The argument of this paper has been rather obvious. We have suggested that the major concerns of sociolinguistics (variation, social context, cross-disciplinary sensitivity and the various internal distinctions including gradience, frequency of occurrence, selectional options, the perceptual viewpoint of the whole and the importance of subjective reactions of language) are all fertile components of a developing sort of applied sociolinguistics. I have tried to illustrate the usefulness of these defining qualities of sociolinguistics in three discrete areas: literary analysis, reading and medicine. These are intended to be only suggestive of the broad areas in which the field might continue to develop. There is probably no academic field which intersects with so much of the rest of life as does linguistics. We have hardly begun to scratch the surface of its potential.